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NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

No. DLXXVI.

NOVEMBER, 1904.

THE YELLOW PERIL IS THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR JAPAN.

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HOUSE OF PEERS OF JAPAN.

WHY the special mission of Prince Iwakura to the European and American governments, in 1872, failed in its attempt to revise our extra-territorial treaty was a mystery to the Japanese people. Why our promulgation of the codes of civil, criminal and commercial laws, with the organizations of the courts and of their procedures, in accordance with Western principles of Christian nations, proved to be of no avail for the abolition of consular jurisdiction in Japan, was again a perplexing mystery to Japanese jurists. And why, for twenty-five years, some of the European governments so persistently waved aside the rightful appeals made to them by Japanese diplomats for the restoration of the autonomy of the Japanese Empire, was not merely a mystery, but a heart-rending mystery, to the statesmen of Japan.

But this mystery was casually explained to me in the year 1892, when I attended the meeting of the Institute of International Law at Geneva, with the special purpose of discussing the report of a committee, to which the Institute had intrusted the task of investigating the condition of Oriental nations with a view to abolishing extra-territorial treaties in the East. On my home-

ward journey, I met in Paris one of the most famous European publicists, who, in the course of our conversations said, substantially in these words: "However closely your codes may approximate to those of Europe, the Western Powers will hesitate to consent to the abolition of the extra-territorial treaties with Japan. They withhold that consent because they fear that, should they return to Japan the full exercise of national independence, she will become great and powerful in the East—a contingency which, they believe, would only arise at the expense and to the menace of their own interests in Asia. It is, therefore, their policy to subject Japan to their oppressive yoke as long as possible."

Words like these seemed to sound the death knell of all our aspirations. For a quarter of a century Japan had, at enormous cost—even at the sacrifice of her priceless traditions—been striving to assimilate her laws and institutions to those of the Western world, with no other object than that of restoring her national autonomy. Yet these utterances of the eminent publicist convinced us that the argument from justice, morality, and humanity had no weight with the European diplomats to the furtherance of our rightful demands. Disappointed, but not discouraged—shocked, but without a murmur—we calmly submitted to our fate! At least, this chilling admonition had given us the secret key to the long-sealed casket of European diplomacy in Asia. In the region of world-diplomacy, where reason fails, there is but one course left. That course Japan was compelled and determined to follow by devoting herself to the completion of her compulsory education system, to the fostering of her industry and commerce, and to the reorganization of her army and navy by modern scientific methods. At last came the event in consequence of which Japan was no longer compelled to beg for a revision of the extra-territorial treaty, but could force upon the Western nations a recognition of her competence to abolish that treaty. After our victory in the China-Japan war of 1894-5 the Western nations discovered in us a Power which they could no longer suppress by keeping us ostracized as a semi-independent nation; they at once changed their attitude, and admitted us to membership in the family of civilized nations.

Having thus, by one victorious campaign against our mighty neighbor, China, restored our national independence; having definitely taken our place in the rank and file of the civilized

Powers of the world, we continued along the peaceful path which we had marked out for our diplomacy, by cultivating the most cordial relations with the nations of Europe and America—relations which remained untroubled by the slightest cloud until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war in February last. It was only after Japan had shown herself in the present struggle to be a match for the most formidable military power in Europe, it was only after she had drawn the bewildered attention of the whole world to her military and naval equipment, her extraordinary successes on land and sea, that we heard again the cry of "Yellow Peril."

What does this epithet mean, when calmly examined? Does it indicate a danger really existing? We may throw light on this question by recalling analogous phrases aimed at other nationalities; of these, one example will suffice. Not many years ago, the cry of "American Peril" was raised. For, when it was found that the United States, with her enormous resources and the wonderful energy of her people, was fast taking a rank among the world Powers, Europeans, scenting peril from America, raised a cry of alarm that echoed even in our country. They even went so far as to plan a "European Alliance," the object of which was to shut out American manufactured goods from the continents of the Old World. Just so, at the present juncture of our war with Russia, certain European politicians have thought fit, assuming a similarly uncharitable attitude towards Japan, to overwhelm her with an undeserved reproach, at the moment when she is forced into a struggle for her existence.

But of what nature is this alleged danger from the "yellow races"? Those who raise the cry tell us that, if Japan wins in this conflict, she will become supreme in the East, will thereupon unite all the Oriental peoples, and will proceed to drive out all Europeans and Americans from the continent of Asia. We are further assured that, when Japan is thus dominant, freedom, even civilization itself, will take flight from the Orient; the dire outcome of Japanese ascendancy will be a policy of "Asia for the Asiatics." Such a policy, we may remark, would in one respect be not unnatural; it would be based on feelings which are instinctive in every people. Is not the "Monroe Doctrine" itself, which has played so important a rôle in the development of the United States, founded on the principle of "America for the

Americans"? And what, during the past forty years, has united the Italian people and enabled Italy to take rank as a member of the family of nations, if not the policy of "Italy for the Italians," as carried out under Victor Emmanuel?

As individual right to ownership in land is recognized, so, in the realm of politics, regard is paid to the territorial rights of nations. Now Asiatics have enjoyed, from time immemorial, the possession of the soil of Asia; their right to its territory has never been disputed. Why, then, should they not assert the principle of "Asia for the Asiatics"? Without territorial rights, the sense of national independence is impossible. This possession gone, no form of casuistry can help the Oriental peoples to hold their own against the aggressive competition of the Occidental Powers; we must have, to the full, the sense of national independence which is founded on the universal recognition of territorial rights.

"Blessed are the meek," is one of the precepts of the Christian faith, "for they shall inherit the earth!" For many years the missionaries have taught this precept to the Asiatics; but it has never been practised by the so-called Christian Powers in their dealings with Oriental nations. Indeed, the direct contrary has been the fact; for, many a time during the past fifty years, it has been shown that a nation's surest step to its "disinheritance" of the earth is to be meek and to remain meek. That a cry should arise in the East demanding "Asia for the Asiatics" is thus a natural outcome of the policy which the Christian Powers have pursued in that part of the world. Most of the Oriental nations, to be sure, lack the strength which is needed for successful resistance to the process of territorial "disinheritance." Consider the encroachment of the French in Tongking; the occupation of Kiao-Chao by the Germans; the aggressive movement of Russia in Manchuria—for these are the most striking examples of the "disinheritance" by which China has been despoiled. Only Japan, of all the Eastern nations, has thus far been able to maintain her independence, against continual foreign aggression. If there is a peril in the East, it is not the "Yellow Peril," but the "White Peril"; the former being a mere myth, while the latter is an actual reality.

Does it follow, however, that, should Japan be victorious in the present struggle and become supreme in the East, she will proceed to exclude Europeans and Americans from Oriental coun-

tries? The facts all point the other way. Instead of trying to shut Americans and Europeans out, Japan so far has done all in her power to attract them to the East. Consider what happened after the war with China in 1894-5. Japan then had China at her mercy, and was able at Shimonoseki to dictate to that Power any terms she cared to impose. But what did she actually do? Instead of seeking her own interests to the neglect of the other Powers, Japan seized the opportunity to promote the policy of the "open door" by providing for the abolition of the *likin* system—the system, which so long prevailed in China, of levying duties on imported goods as they crossed the frontiers of the different provinces on their way to the interior. Japan made another contribution to international welfare at that time by causing China to open four ports to the commerce of the world—the ports of Chung-Kiang, Shasi, Kow-Choo, and Soochoo. Last, but not least, she induced China to grant foreigners the right to establish industrial factories in China. All these concessions had been sought by Western diplomats for many years at Peking, but such efforts proved unavailing, until independent action was taken by Japan at the signing of the Shimonoseki Treaty in 1895. Is it not plain that, if the Japanese had entertained the slightest desire to drive Americans and Europeans from the continent of Asia, they would have made an altogether different treaty with China from the one they made—would, in a word, have sought to secure exclusive advantages for themselves? Instead, the diplomats of Japan devoted themselves sincerely to the task of opening China to the whole world. Even after the return of Wei-hai-wei to China, we made no protest against the occupation of that strategical harbor by the English.

This broader view of Japan's responsibilities as a world Power has appeared in other connections as well. The story was circulated, for instance, during the Spanish-American war, that Japan was secretly assisting the Filipinos, by sending ammunition, and even soldiers, to the aid of Aguinaldo. But the rumor was afterward proved to be false. Not only was Japan not assisting Aguinaldo and the Filipinos, but she was actually giving moral support to the United States in its plans for the occupation of the Philippine Islands, since she considered that the occupation of the islands by the American Republic was the only way to maintain peace among the Filipinos. One might readily multiply such ex-

amples to show to our friends that Japan never entertained the idea of closing the Asiatic continent against Europeans and Americans. From the beginning of our intercourse with the Western Powers, we have earnestly tried to introduce Western civilization into the Far East, and have consistently promoted that civilization in the interests of universal peace.

When the cry of "Yellow Peril" began to be heard, we were aroused to a study of the subject, and its international effects. After the opening of our first parliament in 1890, the attitude of the Western Powers towards Japan underwent a change. We felt that Europe and America were kindly patronizing us, simply patting us on the back. It seemed to us as if our Western friends were saying: "Yes, you have done wonders. You have introduced constitutional government and adopted Western civilization. In the last fifteen years, you have made simply prodigious strides. You are, indeed, a most promising nation!" But there came a further change. When our war with China in 1894-5 ensued, and we showed our superiority to China in that struggle, the Western Powers no longer attempted to pat us on the back. They began to treat Japan with respect, for they recognized in her a naval and a military strength which they had never before suspected.

When we studied the international relations of modern Powers to each other, we found that a country like Belgium or Denmark receives from England the same consideration as Germany in all her diplomatic dealings; that Switzerland is treated by France with the same regard as the United States; and that the respect which is shown to such countries is an acknowledged international right. But a further question is: Do these smaller nations enjoy that deeper respect which is founded on fear? Can they command the esteem which is everywhere paid to their more powerful neighbors, such as Germany, France or England? The answer is obvious. In the realm of diplomacy, the nations treat each other with equal deference, making no distinction on the basis of territory or strength of armament. Yet, since, in the event of international ruptures, there is no other way to settle them than the appeal to arms, a nation, in order to maintain her independent position in the midst of international rivalries, must command sources of power which will inspire other nations, not simply with respect, but with fear. This fear is an evidence of such power in the nation feared, and that power, further, may justly or unjustly be

regarded as a potential peril. Therefore, the cry of "Yellow Peril" is a recognition by the Western nations that Japan has at last attained her long-sought-for rank among the great Powers.

But logic falters when power of such sort is supposed to engender inevitable peril. We are profoundly convinced that the possession of an ample war equipment is necessary (temporarily, at least) if nations are to reap the benefits of our complex modern civilization, provided always that their military and naval forces are not used in the pursuit of selfish ends, for the purposes of aggressive ambition. We recognize a close relation between readiness for war, which on the surface is fraught with menace, and the assured peace which powerful armaments never fail to promote and maintain. History furnishes evidence for the generalization that, the stronger a nation's army and navy, the greater is its certainty of peace—a view expressed at the Peace Conference at The Hague by an eminent English delegate who had come to take part in that movement for the abolition of war. Japan herself has a motto, dating from the earliest time in the life of her people, which runs: "Never forget the arts of war, even in the time of peace!" Nor can Japan afford to forget "the arts of war"; for, while she is, in a geographical sense, situated very advantageously in the world of commerce, the advantage carries with it the constant menace of enforced contact with the most powerful nations on the face of the globe. Consequently, while Japan truly has at heart the interests of peace, her very position in the East compels her to guard peace, for herself and for others, with an efficient army and navy.

Some may ask: What are the national aspirations of Japan? Our aim, as shown by the whole course of our modern history, is to introduce to the distant and long-neglected East the blessings of Western civilization. For a task of this kind, Japan possesses superb advantages. Planted on her island throne in the midst of the Pacific, she reaches out towards every direction from which that civilization may come, westward through the Suez Canal, under English supervision, and eastward through the Panama Canal (when that is completed), under American protection. Japan will engirdle the globe, thus reaching every quarter in the Old World as well as the New, and gathering in the richest fruits of Western culture and science, which she will proceed to disseminate among the Japanese islands. Along all these waterways,

the Western nations will bring their treasures and their civilization to the vast continent of Asia; and will also knock at the door of Japan in their turn. Hearty, indeed, will be the welcome which the Japanese will give to the Western bearers of the civilization from which we have ourselves benefited so much! But the door of Japan must be kept open, for we wish our welcome to be not only hearty, but continuous, as will be the stream of those Western gifts from Europe and America through which we shall alone be enabled, strengthening our own power, to realize our national aspirations, and especially to maintain that peace which is the foundation of progress in the Far East.

For a thousand years or more after the introduction of Chinese culture, which became merged in her ethnic life, Japan had the good fortune to possess an Oriental civilization of her own, embodied in language, art, customs and institutions. But, after the visit of Commodore Perry, in 1853, following the example set us by our ancestors when they introduced Chinese ideas, we turned to the West for culture and science, and thus the laws, the philosophy, the religion and art of Occidental civilization were engrafted upon our institutions. The Japanese mind is earnestly engaged in moulding into one the two forms of culture, the Oriental and the Occidental, its ambition being to harmonize them, even as Rome harmonized the militarism of the northern tribes with the culture of the southern races of Europe.

Such, then, is the ultimate aspiration, the crowning ambition, of the Japanese race. By reconciling and inter-assimilating the two civilizations, Japan hopes to introduce Western culture and science into the continent of Asia, and thus to open up for the benefit of the world, with equal privilege for every nation, and peace assured to all, the teeming wealth of the Chinese Empire. Nothing less than an aim thus ideal and lofty is what Japan aspires to realize; and, should fortune not forsake her, she will be content with nothing less. In the light, therefore, of what has been said, the alarm about a "Yellow Peril" takes on the character of a golden opportunity for Europe and America to become acquainted with the real strength and ambitions of Japan. The same cry, moreover, intended to work us injury and disgrace, provides Japan with a golden opportunity to show the world that selfish ambition has no part in the aspirations of her people.

BARON KENTARO KANEKO.